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New York

President: The Hon. Julian R. Hunte ..... (Saint Lucia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Hoscheit (Luxembourg), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 28 and 40 (*continued*)

The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

(f) Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General (A/58/616)

Draft resolution (A/58/L.32)

Mr. Kazykhanov (Kazakhstan): Exactly two years ago in Bonn, a milestone agreement on Afghanistan was signed under the auspices of the United Nations, giving the Afghans an excellent chance to embark on the road to peaceful development, political stability and economic reconstruction. Since that time, the Afghan Government, with the support of the international community, has made great strides in its efforts to rebuild the country, devastated by over two decades of war.

After the convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga and the establishment of the transitional Government, civilian order is being gradually introduced in Afghanistan. The draft constitution, based on democratic principles and the culture and traditions of the Afghan people, is another big step forward on the road to peace, security and stability in Afghanistan. The convening of the Constitutional Loya Jirga will be the next important stage of post-war nation-building in Afghanistan, which will greatly promote national reconciliation and the establishment of viable institutions of State power.

The recent attack against the United Nations office in Kandahar is yet another reminder of the fragility of peace in Afghanistan. We share the Secretary-General's concern over the insecurity in the region. In our view, to make the peace process irreversible and to fully implement the Bonn Agreement, it is necessary to ensure that security becomes an essential part of the efforts to achieve national reconciliation and suppress terrorist activities and crimes related to drugs.

In this context, we welcome the stabilizing role and a broader mandate of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). The Afghan people have hailed the decision to expand its mandate. We fully share the view of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, that full support from ISAF is required to implement the Afghan peace process and extend the authority of the central Government to all Afghan provinces.

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Kazakhstan reiterates its unwavering support of the central role of the United Nations in the settlement of the Afghan problem. We believe that it is necessary to step up efforts to rehabilitate the economic infrastructure and create favourable conditions for the return of the Afghan refugees to their homes. In our view, long-term humanitarian assistance, culminating in the full implementation of the comprehensive plan for rebuilding the country's economy, is one of the most important tasks of the international community.

Kazakhstan has been providing humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan. We are ready to continue to contribute to the efforts of the international community to build the social and economic infrastructure of that country.

The situation in Afghanistan remains high on the agenda of the Security Council, which continues to pay close attention to post-conflict peace-building in that country. The Council keeps under constant review the issues of security, political reforms and economic assistance to Afghanistan. In that context, we welcome the outcome of the recent Security Council mission to the country. It is symbolic that the Council members' visit coincided with the release of the draft constitution of Afghanistan, a cornerstone of the Bonn Agreement.

We note with satisfaction that the issue of security, which is of great importance for the people and the Government of the country, was the central theme of discussions during the Security Council mission's meeting with the representatives of Afghan society. We agree with the mission's main findings concerning the need to initiate the national reconciliation process in Afghanistan, to reform key Afghan institutions, to withdraw all armed factions from Kabul and to earmark additional funds to step up efforts to ensure security. We share the view that a follow-up conference to the Bonn process would provide a political impetus to work for peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Drug production in and drug trafficking from Afghanistan remain a serious concern for Kazakhstan. We have underscored on numerous occasions the need to establish joint mechanisms to stem once and for all drug trafficking from that country and to allocate adequate resources to implement projects and programmes to combat the distribution of drugs. A comprehensive approach to this problem, based on an integrated international strategy coordinated by the United Nations, is needed to effectively address the drug threat.

We believe that the United Nations, through the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, should pay more attention to the implementation of the programme against drug trafficking in Afghanistan as an effective strategy to battle illegal drug trafficking. The international community should also keep under constant review the continued efforts to eliminate terrorist groups in Afghanistan.

Kazakhstan fully supports the efforts of the international community to achieve a comprehensive settlement of the situation in Afghanistan and actively promotes the implementation of the Bonn Agreement. We deeply believe that the Afghan problem can be solved effectively only through the joint efforts of all those concerned. As for Kazakhstan, it stands ready to make a tangible contribution to this process.

Kazakhstan is a sponsor of the draft resolution on Afghanistan, introduced today by the delegation of Germany. The unprecedented number of sponsors of that draft reflects the commitment of Member States to the Bonn process, with a view to building a new Afghanistan. Kazakhstan supports this important document related to international assistance for peace and security and the promotion of the normalization of the situation and economic reconstruction, in order to improve the life of the Afghan people.

My country will continue to support the efforts of the Government and people of Afghanistan to build an independent and peaceful society in which all Afghan citizens play an active role in the internal political life of the country.

Mr. Haraguchi (Japan): I thank the President of the General Assembly for his initiative of convening this meeting in order to discuss this very important subject on the occasion of the second anniversary of the Bonn Agreement.

During the last two years, much progress has been made, including the recent finalization of the draft constitution, among other achievements, and we commend all the parties involved in Afghanistan for their efforts. In order to further advance the political process in Afghanistan, the upcoming Constitutional Loya Jirga must be successful in producing concrete results which will pave the way for the election to be

held next year. I am confident that the further leadership of President Hamid Karzai and the continued efforts of all parties concerned will facilitate the attainment of those objectives.

Japan, determined that Afghanistan should not become politically destabilized and never revert to being a breeding ground for terrorism, continues to be actively involved in efforts to support its reconstruction in concert with the international community. Recently, Japan extended the term of the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law for the purpose of enabling the Japanese Self-Defence Force vessels deployed in the Indian Ocean to continue to engage in replenishment activities in support of the "Operation Enduring Freedom" coalition fighting terrorism in Afghanistan.

At the Tokyo Conference in January 2002, Japan pledged to provide $500 million in assistance by June 2004. At this point, approximately $468 million, which amounts to more than 90 per cent of the pledged amount, has already been disbursed or allocated for specific projects, and the pace of allocation is accelerating. We are working hard to disburse the remaining $32 million in assistance as early as possible.

In addition, Japan decided last month to make an additional pledge of $20 million through its trust funds in the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, in an effort to respond to Afghanistan's urgent near-term needs. Furthermore, with respect to assistance after June 2004, Japan recently urged the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the United Nations Development Programme to carry out a revised needs assessment for Afghanistan, on the basis of which we will consider future contributions that are commensurate with our international responsibilities.

Restoration of domestic security is indispensable to the advancement of the political process and the smooth implementation of international assistance. From this perspective, the recent trends in the overall security situation, which include the Taliban reunification movement, a shift in terrorist tactics to focus on soft targets such as humanitarian aid workers, the expansion of opium production and the glaring attacks against efforts to promote the rights of women are of grave concern to all of us. We need to seriously address this issue. In this connection, Japan welcomes the adoption of Security Council resolution 1510 (2003) to allow the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to deploy in the provinces and assume additional duties. We strongly hope that, with support from Member States, ISAF will be able to step up its activities outside Kabul and thus contribute to the improvement of the security situation in the provinces.

Japan, taking the lead in tandem with the United Nations in supporting disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes for ex-combatants, welcomes the start of the pilot phase of the DDR programme and reiterates its appeal to the international community to support it. In order to succeed, DDR must be implemented in a fair and equitable manner to ensure that it benefits the Afghan people as a whole and not only specific groups — as was emphasized by the Turkish representative this morning. The verification role of the International Observer Group (IOG) is extremely important in that respect. We highly appreciate the efforts of the IOG in the pilot phase. We urge the Transitional Administration and all Afghan groups to cooperate with the IOG and urge the international community to support it by financial and other means in order to move towards full-scale implementation of DDR programmes.

It is essential that the political process, improvement of domestic security and humanitarian and reconstruction assistance be advanced in a balanced manner. All three elements are interlinked. The current grave security situation risks delaying and even placing in jeopardy the ongoing political and reconstruction processes. The United Nations is now under criticism from various quarters, but it is extremely important for it to rigorously follow through on a task once embarked upon in order to maintain its authority. The United Nations has taken a forceful initiative to help Afghanistan escape conditions of coercion, poverty and conflict and to become a democratic and peaceful State with bright prospects for the future. Achieving that objective is extremely important for Afghanistan and for the United Nations as well. In sponsoring and strongly endorsing the draft resolution presented here, we wish to re-emphasize the importance of remaining focused on our commitment to making the utmost effort to realize that goal.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Two years that passed since signing of the Bonn Agreement on Afghanistan represent a short period from a historical viewpoint. It is all the more impressive that significant results were achieved in such a short time. The peace process in Afghanistan

continues to unfold, the new authorities are getting stronger, and issues related to State construction and socio-economic rehabilitation are being addressed. The territory of Afghanistan is no longer a beachhead for international terrorism and is no longer a threat to its neighbours.

At the same time, the Afghan settlement is going through serious problems at this crucial stage, which will determine to a great extent whether the reforms become irreversible or a danger arises that the country will slip into the quagmire of internecine warfare.

The Constitutional Loya Jirga, which is to lay down a basis for a form of government and to open the way for general democratic elections, will be a milestone in the political life of the country. We expect the Afghan people to approach this event with great responsibility and to take advantage of the historic chance to ensure the unity of their State on the basis of respect for the interests of all ethnic groups and compliance with fundamental legal norms and human freedoms.

The increase in the subversive activity of extremists, including the remaining followers of the former Taliban regime, poses a serious threat to the stability and advancement of the peace process. It is quite obvious that these enemies of the Afghan nation and the international community are trying to hamper the reform process and again plunge the country into the chaos of war. We believe it is necessary to carefully see to it that the former active henchmen of the Taliban are not allowed into the new States structures. We are convinced that it can be done without harm to the process of reconciliation in Afghan society.

We attach great importance to the consistent compliance with the Kabul Declaration on Good Neighbourly Relations by the signatory States. All other countries should provide assistance in the implementation of the Declaration.

One should be very cautious when it comes to the reform of the armed forces and the whole range of security related issues in Afghanistan. On the one hand, it is necessary to seek a balanced representation of the ethnic groups in law enforcement agencies. On the other hand, it is necessary to rely on those forces that have proven their commitment to building a new Afghanistan and to fight the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. We welcome the international efforts to establish an Afghan national army.

This year Russia made its contribution to these efforts by supplying the armed forces of Afghanistan with fuel, automobiles, communications equipment, spare parts for automobiles and armoured vehicles and other military equipment worth approximately $50 million. At this stage the presence of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) is a key factor in ensuring security in Afghanistan. It is evident that in order to stabilize the situation throughout the Afghan territory ISAF should expand its presence beyond Kabul, first of all into the southern and south-east areas. We welcome the German decision to create an "ISAF island" in Kunduz. For the purposes of contributing to better security in Afghanistan, the Russian Government allowed for the transit of military equipment for ISAF through Russian territory.

The threat of narcotics coming from the Afghan territory continues unabated. According to the report of the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, presented in Moscow on 29 October, production of drugs and illegal drug trafficking from Afghanistan continue to increase. This highlights once again the need for active work, both inside Afghanistan and along its borders, to establish reliable security belts which would serve as a deterrent to drug trafficking.

A lot is yet to be done in the areas of reconstruction and rehabilitation. It is important to ensure that the contributions announced at numerous donor conferences be allocated and delivered to the Afghan people to improve the quality of their life. Russia is ready to play an active part in the international efforts to rehabilitate the Afghan economy. Using the experience from the 1960s to the 1980s when, due to the economic assistance of the former Soviet Union, 142 facilities were built in Afghanistan, including natural gas production facilities in the north of the country, a nitrogen fertilizer plant in Mazar-i-Sharif, a hydroelectric power station, the Kabul airport, the Salang Tunnel and others, we believe it would be useful to combine these demonstrated Russian technologies and experience with the financial support of donor countries.

The United Nations should continue to play its central coordinating role in international efforts in Afghanistan. We support the active work by Secretary-General's Special Representative head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi. Given that the Bonn peace process schedule will be completed with the holding of general

elections in Afghanistan, it would be appropriate to hold another representative international conference that would develop parameters for the involvement of the international community at the next stage of the Afghan peace process.

We believe it would be useful to keep the work on Afghanistan within the General Assembly and the Security Council. Decisions adopted by these two bodies are complementary; they do not duplicate each other. We support the draft resolution on Afghanistan prepared by a wide group of sponsors and presented by Germany. We hope that if it is adopted by consensus, it will add to the consolidated efforts being taken by the international community in the interest of the rehabilitation of Afghanistan.

Mr. Chindawongse (Thailand): Two years ago, the global war against international terrorism was first waged in Afghanistan. Today, Afghanistan not only serves as a front line in this global war, but also as a test case as to whether democracy and freedom can thrive in a land once controlled by an intolerant regime. It is therefore incumbent upon the international community to remain seriously engaged in rebuilding Afghanistan and therefore timely that we, the international community, focus our attention yet again on Afghanistan through the concurrent consideration of agenda items 28 and 40 (f) at the plenary of the General Assembly.

In this regard, Thailand welcomes the report issued by the Secretary-General on Afghanistan (A/57/850) and the report of the Security Council mission to Afghanistan from 31 October to 7 November 2003 (S/2003/1074).

These two documents point out two general trends. On the one hand, there has been progress in the Bonn process and we look forward to the national elections scheduled for next year. On the other hand, Afghanistan continues to be plagued by problems of security, stemming from terrorist activities, factional fights and drug-related crimes.

At the end of the day, further sustainable progress on all fronts in Afghanistan will depend to a great extent on the improvement in the security situation and the continued support of the international community to the rebuilding of Afghanistan. Failure to address either the security challenges or the assistance and rehabilitation needs of the Afghan people would certainly undermine the investment made by the international community in Afghanistan thus far.

We therefore assemble here today to renew our political commitment to an Afghanistan that is at peace with itself and its neighbours, where its peoples can enjoy the fruits of democracy, stability and prosperity. We are here to help ensure that this important test case of United Nations post-conflict nation rebuilding succeeds. In this connection, I should like to express our gratitude to Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Afghanistan (UNAMA), as well as staff of UNAMA, for their tireless efforts in helping the Afghan Transitional Administration rebuild the country.

Restoration of security, expansion of Government authority and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) urgently need to be accomplished. The expansion of the mandate of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to areas beyond Kabul should help address some of the security concerns. But it is equally important to address the economic and social needs of the Afghan people through the restoration of their livelihoods, rebuilding the economic infrastructure and addressing the drug related challenges to Afghan society.

With that in mind, during the International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan in Tokyo in 2002, Thailand pledged to assist Afghanistan in areas where we have some expertise, such as infrastructure rebuilding, demining activities and alternative development programmes, including crop substitution.

So far, the Thai commitment to assisting Afghanistan has been realized through various specific activities. Between March and September 2003, Thai military engineers and demining experts were dispatched to Afghanistan to undertake the humanitarian mission of renovating Bagram airport.

A high-level Afghan delegation led by His Excellency Mr. Mohammad Alam Razam, Minister for Light Industry and Foodstuffs of Afghanistan, paid a study visit to Thailand between July and August 2003, and paid courtesy calls on the Prime Minister of Thailand and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand to discuss issues of cooperation. The delegation also visited the Doi Tung Royal

Development Project in northern Thailand in order to get first-hand experience with alternative development programmes, including opium eradication, crop substitution and other agricultural development projects.

Thailand is also arranging human resources development programmes in response to the needs of the Afghan people in areas where Thailand has some expertise, such as agriculture, rural development, small- and medium-size enterprises and vocational training. Plans are underway to send a Thai technical mission to Afghanistan next year to map out those human resources development programmes. In order to provide a framework for those cooperation activities, Thailand is working towards normalizing relations with Afghanistan.

Thailand is looking beyond the current difficulties faced by Afghanistan and towards the future, to a time when Afghanistan will be ready to engage in active partnership with the international community. Once peace and security have been restored nationwide in Afghanistan, the foundation will be laid for a brighter future of sustained economic, social and cultural progress. Thailand is therefore seeking to build a mutually beneficial partnership with Afghanistan and is exploring possible areas of cooperation, including the field of aviation, the development of new markets and the restoration of Buddhist religious sites.

But this future Afghanistan will arrive only if the international community remains steadfast in its commitment to help Afghanistan effectively resolve the challenges of the present. The draft resolutions under these agenda items are expressions of this commitment, for which Thailand is proud to be a sponsor.

Mr. Kim Sam-hoon (Republic of Korea): I would like first to express my thanks to the Secretary-General for his latest reports on Afghanistan and commend the tireless efforts of his Special Representative, Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi, and the staff of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). We are also gratified by the report of the Security Council mission on their visit to Afghanistan from 31 October to 7 November 2003.

In commemorating the second anniversary of the Bonn Agreement today, the international community can take great satisfaction in the fact that several of its benchmarks have been met. Progress has been most visible with the reopening of schools, construction of roads and the launching of a new currency. We particularly welcome developments in the political sector, including the promulgation of the draft Constitution, and the political processes underway for the holding of general elections next year. Such developments offer hope to the Afghan people that, despite the formidable obstacles that abound, the goal of establishing a broad-based, multi-ethnic and democratic Government is within reach.

While significant progress has been made during the past two years, the enormous complexities of post-conflict Afghanistan pose the most challenging problems in the areas of security, good governance and reconstruction. It should be pointed out that the current inadequate peace, as evidenced by the deteriorating conditions in some parts of the country, has been disquieting to the Afghan population.

It is clear from the visit of the Security Council mission that terrorism, factionalism, and drug production and trafficking are the three major sources of instability. My delegation deeply regrets the senseless acts of violence against United Nations staff members, including the murder of a staff member of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees last month and the bombing of United Nations offices near Kandahar. Sporadic terrorist attacks are a searing reminder to the international community that Afghanistan was until just two years ago a safe abode for terrorists. We should therefore remain vigilant against terrorist actions by the remnants of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda.

Factional fighting has had a turbulent place in Afghanistan's history and was a contributing factor in the past for plunging that nation into civil war and allowing it to become a terrorist haven. The current realities on the ground, as reflected by the report of the Security Council mission, show that factional fighting continues to result in heavy casualties. We believe that lessons of past experiences, as well as instances where the Afghan people have successfully achieved reconciliation at the community level, need to be recognized and acted upon, if the Afghan nation is to overcome its present instability and become a stable country.

In this regard, we are encouraged by the commitments expressed by factional leaders to the visiting Security Council mission concerning the

implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme.

We view the production and trafficking of narcotics in Afghanistan as a major source of instability. Given its link with terrorism, the increased drug production is of utmost concern. We recognize that there can be no prompt and easy solution to that problem. The difficulties of that question require progress on other fronts, including education, security, reconstruction as well as the effective functioning of the Central Government throughout Afghanistan.

We welcome Security Council resolution 1510 (2003), which, inter alia, authorizes expansion of the mandate of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), in areas of Afghanistan outside of Kabul and its environs. The expansion of its mandate will no doubt contribute to moving the Bonn process forward by promoting a more secure environment. We also appreciate the work being carried out by the provincial reconstruction teams, whereby security and reconstruction are being pursued simultaneously.

In the light of the fact that responsibility for security ultimately rests with the Afghan people, we welcome the various initiatives to expedite the development of the national police and the Afghan national army. The active participation of Afghan personnel in the security sector will promote a more stable environment for the convening of the Constitutional Loya Jirga and the relevant electoral processes. Additionally, it will enhance the much-needed confidence of Afghan society in their capacity for self-rule.

Given the close linkages between peace, security and development, the rehabilitation and reconstruction process has been difficult to implement in the absence of a stable peace, but improvement in the security environment depends on the promotion of rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts. Hence, the sustained assistance of the international community is vital to meet those goals. At the same time, we firmly believe that the Afghan people have a wealth of talent, initiative and drive to develop their own county.

For its part, the Republic of Korea is strongly committed to the reconstruction of Afghanistan. We have provided $12 million to alleviate the suffering of Afghan refugees and will provide up to $45 million through 2004. We have also dispatched medical units and engineering personnel to assist with the nation-building endeavours. My Government will continue to do everything in its capacity to help the Afghan people move forward.

For more than two decades, the people of Afghanistan were entrenched in a life of misery and lawlessness. Now, the future offers them hope, promise and optimism. International assistance will enable the Afghan people to restore stability and vitality to their society. However, it is of course up to the Afghan people themselves to determine their own future, especially in realizing a comprehensive peace, one that will endure for generations to come.

Mr. Nazarov (Tajikistan) (*spoke in Russian*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Tajikistan. Tajikistan, which has always been among the sponsors of the resolution on this issue, believes the General Assembly's consideration of the situation in Afghanistan to be an important signal from the international community to the Afghan people. The Afghan society needs to know that the problems of peace-building in Afghanistan continue to be a top priority on the agenda of the world community, which must continue to support the peace process in that country. That is crucial precisely now, when Afghanistan has begun to tackle one of the major tasks of building its new society: the holding of the Constitutional Loya Jirga, which will strengthen State administration in the country, a prerequisite for creating a lasting, vital Government in a revived Afghanistan.

Given the disappointment of the Afghan participants at the talks because of the lack of a significant peace dividend and the lack of tangible assets, particularly in the provinces, it is important that the political consensus achieved by the Afghan parties in the Bonn Agreement not only be maintained but be demonstrated with greater force in order to achieve peace, national concordance and stability in the country.

As was the case two years ago, we are at a decisive moment in the history of this new post-Taliban Afghanistan. Clearly, if the peace process in Afghanistan is not protected, in particular by donor States, criminal and remnant Taliban elements will undermine the progress made.

With respect to resolving the urgent tasks in Iraq, we are still concerned at the possibility that

Afghanistan could be simply abandoned to its fate. It is not difficult to imagine the dangers that would arise if that kind of scenario unfolded in Afghanistan. Primarily, it would strengthen the forces of international terrorism and give them a serious asset for attracting into their ranks people who are disappointed at the efforts and capacity of the international community in Afghanistan. We should not forget that one in three of the world's 10 million refugees is Afghan. Reducing or ending assistance and rehabilitation programmes in Afghanistan on the pretext of donor fatigue or a lack of sufficient resources can only undermine faith in the international community and revive the forces of evil, which are simply biding their time after their crushing defeat.

Therefore today, as never before, Afghans need more than moral and political support — which is important, of course. Primarily, they need assistance in their daily struggle for survival. Success on the political front, like success in the rehabilitation of Afghanistan, including infrastructure and job creation projects, will ultimately be the key test of the peace process.

Tajikistan is actively involved in the humanitarian component of the comprehensive programme of assistance to the brotherly, neighbouring country of Afghanistan. At the same, I stress that my country's resources — both human and productive resources — can and should be more widely used in the rehabilitation projects going on in Afghanistan. My Government is prepared to do everything it can to ensure that Tajikistan continues to serve as a corridor for the delivery of food and other essential goods to Afghanistan.

Tajikistan believes that the implementation of the next stage of the Bonn Agreement — however important that is — should not be in itself the goal of the Afghan peace process. It is essential that implementation of each stage should lead to a restructuring of the very essence of the socio-economic bases of Afghan society after the many years of war. It is important that the Afghan people be rescued from the vicious circle of tragedy, poverty, conflict and violence. We hope that the Karzai administration, which the Government of Tajikistan fully supports, will defend the interests of ordinary Afghans.

We are convinced that the efforts of President Karzai, with the assistance of the international community, will ultimately, inter alia, put an end to the production and illegal trafficking of drugs. In Afghanistan today, unfortunately, we are witnessing a situation where the narcotics economy in Afghanistan is out of control. Opium production is depleting the resources of the country, is corrupting producers and significantly affecting consumer markets.

We must be blunt here. The problem of drugs of Afghan origin is an international problem. It follows that we all need to be involved in this. The fire of heroin, which continues to smoulder in the shards of the Taliban regime, poses a danger not only for the stable development of a new Afghanistan but also for the maintenance of international peace and security. That point was made at the special meeting the Security Council held in June.

During the terrible years of war against the Taliban regime, Tajikistan always sided with the Afghan people. The collapse of that anti-popular movement gave us all hope and optimism for the revival of Afghan society. Those hopes will be strengthened as Afghan groups refrain from confrontation, establish friendly relations among themselves and see one another as members of a single Afghan family. I am convinced that the time will come when the law of violence and weapons in Afghanistan will yield to the rule of law and tolerance.

At the same time, it is very important that other mistakes do not occur when changes are made — and in particular when changes are made in the armed forces and when seeking to establish balance in the representation of ethnic groups. We believe that using those very armed forces, which never betrayed the aspirations of the Afghan people to live in a civilized and democratic society, would be the best way of reflecting the aspirations of the Afghan people, who have suffered so much from the Taliban's medieval regime and at the hands of the international terrorists who were given free rein in that country. The experience of Tajikistan's armed forces in the area of post-conflict reform could serve as a model for the taking of balanced decisions in this regard.

It is important not merely to assess the positive peacekeeping experience of the United Nations in Afghanistan; it is now very important to critically look into peacekeeping in Afghanistan. In that regard, the President of Afghanistan's desire to convene an international conference to assess overall

implementation of the Bonn process should be fully supported. That conference could assess what has been done by the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, which has an important stabilizing role in that country. Tajikistan has always supported expanding the presence of the Force beyond Kabul.

In conclusion, I would like to say that Tajikistan fully abides by all the obligations entered into through the Kabul Declaration on Good-Neighbourly Relations, which was adopted on 22 December. We call upon all States to implement the Declaration's provisions and to assist in bringing about regional stability.

Finally, I would like to convey my sincere gratitude to the Permanent Representative of Germany and his colleagues for the excellent job they did in preparing and introducing the draft resolution. Germany is one of the leaders in normalizing the situation in Afghanistan; Tajikistan is prepared to continue to cooperate with Germany and all interested parties in that regard.

Mr. Sharma (Nepal): Afghanistan has come a long way in the past two years. In the war against terror that came in the wake of the attacks of 11 September, the Taliban regime was removed, and its leaders are hiding in the rugged landscape of the country. Al-Qaeda has been significantly weakened, and its leaders are on the run. The Bonn process is helping the Afghan people to get back on their feet after nearly two decades of chaos and civil war. Kabul, by and large, is peaceful, and the Karzai Government has survived the heavy odds stacked against it. A decision has been taken to expand the scope of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) outside Kabul. The international community has allocated resources for the reconstruction of the war-torn country. A new, democratic constitution has been drafted, and preparations for general elections in 2004 are on course.

Those are indeed encouraging and welcome developments. Nepal congratulates President Karzai for his effective leadership, as well as the Afghan people for their wisdom and commitment to restore peace and normalcy. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General — Mr. Brahimi — and his team deserve our appreciation for the commendable work they have been doing in Afghanistan. Nepal also praises the world community for its support to help Afghanistan to move forward.

We must not, however, be complacent about developments, which have not yet become irreversible. Besides, there are other formidable challenges ahead. The Taliban is regrouping, and the warlords continue to defy Kabul. Demining is slow, as is the process of reconstruction and development. The world community has yet to make the security umbrella large enough, or to open its wallet wide enough, to create conditions to transform the institutions and infrastructure of Afghanistan in order to evolve the country into a vibrant, democratic and stable society. The persistent political uncertainty and sluggish reconstruction efforts will eventually frustrate the ordinary people of Afghanistan, who would like to get on with their lives. The prevailing insecurity will strengthen recidivist forces, which see chaos working to their advantage.

Afghanistan is close to our hearts in Nepal. The two nations, which share similar problems and prospects, have traditionally enjoyed warm and friendly relations. Nepal would like to see Afghanistan thrive to become a stable and prosperous nation, as well as to contribute to that process. That is why Nepal has, time and again, reiterated that Afghanistan needs security throughout its length and breadth, as well as resources to help its reconstruction and development. If security fails Afghanistan, development will not be possible; and if development fails, Afghanistan will not have durable peace. Therefore, if ISAF can provide the much-needed security, so be it. If not, the United Nations must swing into action and establish a United Nations peacekeeping operation in that nation without delay. Meanwhile, efforts should also be undertaken to expand and reinforce Afghan security forces.

Poverty, illiteracy and disease are pervasive in Afghanistan, as they are in so many other poor developing countries. Women suffer the worst from those ills, and entrenched discrimination against them is rife. As we have seen in the past, a poor and deprived Afghanistan could be its own worst enemy. But the implications of that will reverberate far beyond Afghanistan's borders.

If Afghanistan fails economically, the country will continue to lure terrorists and troublemakers, to generate restive refugees and to produce opium and the pain of addiction that will affect the entire world. Economic revitalization, as much as improved security, is critical to stabilize Afghanistan and strengthen its efforts to build a strong democracy. Alternative means of livelihood — including crop substitution — will be

essential to discourage people from poppy production in that country.

The international community must therefore help the Afghan people with a sense of urgency to deal not only with the humanitarian problems they now face. It must also assist them in climbing out of their unenviable social and economic conditions. Assistance from neighbouring countries, as much as from development partners, will be vital in that process. Helping Afghanistan is in the collective interest of the community of nations. We must be alive to that critical necessity.

Nepal supports the draft resolution introduced by Germany as a step in the right direction.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have thus heard the last speaker in the debate on agenda item 28 and sub-item (f) of agenda item 40.

I now invite the General Assembly to consider draft resolution A/58/L.32, which has two parts. Part A is entitled "The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security", and part B is entitled "Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan".

I would like to announce that, since the introduction of draft resolution A/58/L.32, the following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Antigua and Barbuda, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Granada, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Oman, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, the Sudan, the United Republic of Tanzania, the United States of America and Vanuatu.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/58/L.32?

Draft resolution A/58/L.32 was adopted (resolution 58/27 A and B).

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 28 and sub-item (f) of agenda item 40.

The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.